


Shannon Norton  
Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

**FROM:** Shannon Norton, Executive Director

**CC:** Kevin Coughlin, Executive Director, MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board

**DATE:** 3/14/2023

**SUBJECT:** **MOTION RESPONSE: 2/21/23 – C. Corey Robinson** – Req. City Manager work with the Career Center and Local Businesses to Explore the Feasibility of Creating a Partnership to Help Provide Professional Attire for Employment Interviews/Opportunities

Customers who are enrolled in programs at the MassHire Career Center will be referred out to agencies and businesses for clothing for job interviews if they need the clothing. All MassHire's budget is funded by Federal, State and in some cases private foundation funding. When allowable by the funder, we will incorporate in the budget, funding for support services which would include clothing for interviews and clothing needed while on the job. For example, one of our programs, which is funded entirely by generous private foundations, is to provide support services to job seekers who have barriers to employment once they are placed in a job. One of the services we provide through this grant is gift cards to Kohl's for clothing to wear on the job.

There are some options that offer clothing for interviews free of charge. Pre-Covid we worked with Suitability, a program that provided interview clothes for free, overseen by Community Teamwork. That organization no longer exists in Lowell. In lieu of this, we have been referring our customers to Uncommon Threads in Lawrence. This organization is by appointment only and offers women's clothing for interviewing and on the job. Flip-Flop is a vintage store in downtown Lowell. Flip-Flop will offer interview clothing for free for those in need by appointment only. Our staff recently visited this store and will make referrals as needed. St. Vincent De Paul thrift shop on Middlesex Street in Lowell is another resource for clothing. Many of our Young Adults have had paid work experience at that location. We are now looking into establishing a Purchase Order with the store so we can make referrals for our customers to purchase clothing along with a staff member. Staff at our Young Adult Career Center make referrals to Catie's Closet. Catie's Closet is in Lowell Public Schools to provide free clothing to students who need it. In addition, if a customer is enrolled in a program funded by the Department of Transitional Assistance, they can get adult clothing for interviews or on the job, at the Catie's Closet located in Dracut.